

# *North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame*

*established 1996*  
as a program of the North Carolina Writers' Network

2004 Induction Ceremony  
October 17, 2004



Weymouth Center for the Arts & Humanities  
Southern Pines, North Carolina



*North Carolina  
Literary Hall of Fame*





*North Carolina  
Literary Hall of Fame*

***2004 Inductees***

DORIS BETTS

JAMES MCGIRT

TOM WICKER

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# *North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame*

## Sixth Induction Ceremony

Sunday, October 17, 2004 w 2:00 p.m.

Cp806  
N87Lh  
2004

### WELCOME

Cynthia Barnett  
Executive Director, North Carolina Writers' Network

J. Peder Zane  
Master of Ceremonies; *Raleigh News and Observer*

### INDUCTION

#### DORIS BETTS

Presenting: Bland Simpson; Reading: Randall Kenan

#### JAMES MCGIRT

Presenting: Carole Boston Weatherford; Accepting: Albertina McGirt; Reading: Lenard Moore

#### TOM WICKER

Presenting: Frank Daniels, Jr.; Reading: Jan Hensley

### INTERMISSION

with music by Shelby Stephenson

### PRESENTATION OF STUDENT POETRY WINNER

by Rebecca Smith, Barton College

### READING

of winning poem, "Tempest" (A Pantoum), by Josh Harris

### RECOGNITION OF AWARD'S ARTIST

by Marsha Warren

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

*Reception to follow in The Great Room*



## THE LITERARY HALL OF FAME AWARD'S ARTIST 2004

Jeanette Sheehan, Visual Artist

Jeanette McGrath Sheehan, who maintains a studio in her home in Pinehurst, N.C., was born in Chicago. Her early artistic influences were from her paternal grandmother, a sculptor and her maternal grandmother, a painter. Her art studies include instruction from a number of well-known artists, and classes at the Charles H. Cecil Studios in Florence, Italy and the Art Institute of Chicago.

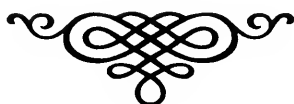
Ms. Sheehan's work has received many awards and solo exhibitions around the country. Her work hangs in numerous corporate offices throughout the state and can be seen at Chanticleer and Campbell House, Southern Pines; erl originals, inc., Winston-Salem and Tyler/White Gallery, Greensboro.

"For the past 25 years I have had an ever-evolving love affair with the painting process. There are endless ways to depict the landscapes, florals and still lifes to which I am attracted, and my personal expression incorporates vivid colors and lively textures.

"The excitement in using watercolors lies in keeping a balance between spontaneity and control. The enjoyment of oils is the "feel" of moving the paint around, and pastels lend themselves to rich textures.

"I hope my paintings will convey a feeling of well-being and the viewer will identify with the subjects and recall his or her own experiences."

The 2004 Art Award is a watercolor of the Weymouth House.





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## FOREWORD

### WEYMOUTH, WRITERS AND WORDS

It is a sturdy house, 100 years old now and still rising among glossy magnolias and tall pines which lean into the Carolina wind. Its elegance is understated, with none of the ostentation one might expect of a twenty-room house. Weymouth served the Boyd family well for seventy years; since 1979 its service has expanded beyond family to community, its mission marked by the good taste which distinguishes its architectural design.

In 1904, James Boyd, a steel and railroad magnate, purchased 1,200 acres in Southern Pines and built a home. He christened this new estate "Weymouth," after a town he had visited in England. Set amidst a magnificent stand of virgin long-leaf pines, it served as a country manor where his grandson and namesake, James, often came as a boy to repair frail health and explore the imposing pine forest and surrounding countryside.

Later young James went to Princeton and earned a master's degree at Cambridge. After serving as an ambulance driver during World War I, an experience which left his health even more fragile, he returned to Weymouth for recovery. In 1919, he and his new wife, the former Katharine Lamont, spent their honeymoon in the house, which by now James co-owned with his brother, Jackson. The following year, he and Katharine moved to Weymouth and began redesigning it. They moved part of the original house across Connecticut Avenue to become part of Jackson's new home, now known as the Campbell House. To the remaining structure, they added a second story and two wings, enlarging the Georgian-style house to 9,000 square feet.

James Boyd, now 34 years old, left the management of the family business to his brother while he pursued the dream which had begun when he was editor of his high school newspaper: to become a writer. Boyd's biographer, David Whisnant, observes that Boyd chose to live in Southern Pines because this site "seemed to offer the best conditions for beginning [a literary career]—a reasonable physical comfort, freedom from distractions, and a mild climate...and an opportunity to affirm the tangible values of American life." One of the earliest visitors to the newly-enlarged home was British novelist and playwright John Galsworthy, who, after reading Boyd's stories, encouraged him to try a novel, then, on a trip to New York, urged publishers to "keep an eye on James Boyd." In 1925, Scribner's published Boyd's first novel, *Drums*. It won immediate attention, not only for its story but for its realism—the result of Boyd's extensive and meticulous research.

Boyd went on to write more novels, a number of short stories and a collection of poetry. In 1941, he expanded his career by purchasing and editing the *Southern Pines Pilot*. Meanwhile, his home became a welcome retreat for many of the best writers of the day: Thomas Wolfe, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, John P. Marquand, and Paul Green, as well as his editor, the legendary Maxwell Perkins, and his illustrator, N.C. Wyeth. His daughter, Nancy Sokoloff, recalls that "During my father's lifetime there were no 'writers' colonies.' Our living room and that of Paul and Elizabeth Green served as settings for serious work and

conversations about Southern writing and its future."

The serious conversations went beyond literature. During World War II, Boyd organized and served as the National Chairman of the Free Company of Players, a group of writers who were concerned that constitutional rights might be compromised during the frenzy of wartime. Among the writers joining him in writing plays for broadcast over national radio were Orson Welles, Paul Green, Archibald MacLeish, and Stephen Vincent Benet.

In 1944, after James Boyd's untimely death, Katharine continued living at Weymouth and publishing the *Pilot*. She and her children donated 400 pine-filled acres to the State for development into the Weymouth Woods Nature Preserve. When she died in 1974, she left the house, remaining land and forest to Sandhills Community College, which in 1977 put the estate on the market. Fearful that this treasure would be demolished by developers, two friends of the Boyds undertook the task of saving it. Elizabeth Stevenson (Buffie) Ives organized Friends of Weymouth; Sam Ragan, then editor of the *Pilot*, rallied support from the State of North Carolina, the Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club, the North Carolina Writers' Conference, and the North Carolina Poetry Society. The first person Ragan approached, playwright Paul Green, made the first donation: \$1,000. Later, Moore County resident Bob Drummond provided a major boost with an initial contribution of \$20,000 and a later donation of an equal amount.

Since 1979, the house, surrounded by twenty-two acres, has flourished as a full-fledged cultural center. College groups and various arts groups hold meetings and retreats here. The great room and back lawn host concerts by chamber music groups and such notables as Doc Watson and lectures by speakers as varied as social critic Tom Wolfe and sociologist John Shelton Reed. There have also been frequent readings by North Carolina writers such as Clyde Edgerton, Kaye Gibbons and Shelby Stephenson, as well as an annual poetry festival the last Saturday in June.

In addition to formal programs, Weymouth has hosted one of former North Carolina Poet Laureate Sam Ragan's favorite projects: residencies offering writers, artists and composers stays of up to two weeks to pursue their art in James Boyd's hospitable home. Poet and novelist Guy Owen was the first writer-in-residence; in 1981, just a few months before his death, he also made his last public reading at Weymouth. By 2000 more than 500 writers and artists had held residencies here. Many testify that their art has flourished on this site; some even credit the hovering spirit of James Boyd and perhaps those of his many literary guests with providing additional creative impetus.

It is fitting that Weymouth, where James Boyd and hundreds of other writers have found congenial conditions for their work, is the site of the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame. It is also fitting that the space set aside for this distinction is the upstairs Boyd Library, where James did his own writing, often by dictating to a stenographer as he paced back and forth, taking on the voices of his characters. Perhaps the spirits of those who are honored here will join the chorus of literary masters whose influence echoes through the halls and across the grounds of Weymouth.

Sally Buckner  
Raleigh, North Carolina

## INTRODUCTION

*And down the centuries that wait ahead there'll be some whisper of our name, some mention and devotion to the dream that brought us here.*

— The Lost Colony by Paul Green

From its earliest days, North Carolina has been blessed with the "mention and devotion" of a great host of writers living and working in the state. A rich literary heritage is a legacy cherished by all North Carolinians.

The North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame is established as a perpetual opportunity to remember, honor and celebrate that heritage. By marking the contribution of its literary giants of every generation, it will support and encourage the further flourishing of excellent literature in the state.

The North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame was the dream of a generation of the state's most dedicated cultural leaders, mobilized by Sam Ragan, former poet laureate of North Carolina. It was authorized by a Joint Resolution of the General Assembly on July 23, 1993, then formally established by a grant from the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources to the North Carolina Writers' Network, a literary organization serving writers and readers across the state since 1985.

The Hall of Fame is physically located in a notable shrine of North Carolina writing. The Weymouth Center for the Arts & Humanities in Southern Pines is the former home and workplace of novelist James Boyd and his wife Katharine, a distinguished journalist and patron of the arts. The large room where plaques, pictures, books and other memorabilia of the state's honored writers are displayed was Boyd's workroom.

Members of the Hall of Fame are selected by a committee of writers. The goal is to choose widely and inclusively from the great parade of novelists, poets, short story writers, playwrights, journalists and storytellers of all sorts who have called themselves North Carolinians. While the first year honored only those from the past, the Hall of Fame now joins other notable cultural award programs in honoring living writers.

Seventy-five years ago, an editor visiting North Carolina marveled at the literary liveliness of the place where, she said, writers flourished in "an atmosphere of plain living and high thinking that I never experienced before."

In the spirit of those who over the centuries have graced North Carolina with a literature of such quality, beauty and power, the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame proudly honors writers who have achieved enduring stature in their mention and devotion to their art and to the state.

Roy Parker, Jr.  
Fayetteville, North Carolina

## *LITERARY HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES*

A.R. Ammons (2000)  
Doris Betts (2004)  
LeGette Blythe (2002)  
James Boyd (1996)  
Charles W. Chesnutt (1996)  
Jonathan Daniels (1996)  
Olive Tilford Dargan (2000)  
Burke Davis (2000)  
Wilma Dykeman (1998)  
John Ehle (1997)  
Inglis Fletcher (1996)  
John Hope Franklin (1998)  
Paul Green (1996)  
Bernice Kelly Harris (1996)  
George Moses Horton (1996)  
Harriet Ann Jacobs (1997)  
Randall Jarrell (1996)  
Gerald Johnson (1996)  
James McGirt (2004)  
John Charles McNeill (1998)  
Joseph Mitchell (1997)  
Pauli Murray (1998)  
Guy Owen (1996)  
Frances Gray Patton (1997)  
William Sydney Porter (O. Henry) (1996)  
Reynolds Price (2002)  
Sam Ragan (1997)  
Christian Reid (2002)  
Glen Rounds (2002)  
Robert Ruark (2000)  
Louis Rubin (1997)  
Elizabeth Spencer (2002)  
Thad Stern, Jr. (1996)  
Richard Walser (1996)  
Manly Wade Wellman (1996)  
Tom Wicker (2004)  
Jonathan Williams (1998)  
Thomas Wolfe (1996)

# Doris Betts

1932-

Distinguished author, esteemed teacher, mentor and champion of writers, all of these attributes make Doris Waugh Betts one of North Carolina's most admired and beloved literary figures and a leading light in American letters.

Acclaimed for such novels as *The Sharp Teeth of Love* and *Souls Raised from the Dead*, she spawned a new generation of writers in her thirty-five years as a creative writing teacher at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

A native of Statesville, Betts began writing for her hometown newspaper as a teenager. At UNC-Greensboro, she took a job in the campus news bureau, contributed to the college newspaper and magazine, and still managed to be a Phi Beta Kappa student.

Along the way, she won the *Mademoiselle* magazine college fiction award. A year later, Putnam awarded her a literary prize and published *The Gentle Insurrection*, her first collection of short stories, written when she was a sophomore.

*Tall Houses in Winter* (1957) was her first novel and the first of her three works of fiction to win the Sir Walter Raleigh Award from the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association. Her second novel, *The Scarlet Thread* (1965), also won the Sir Walter Raleigh Award.

After working for a number of North Carolina newspapers, Betts came to Carolina in 1966 to teach creative writing and has held the title of alumni distinguished professor since 1980.

"Up among the stars or at home in small towns in North Carolina," *The New York Times Book Review* has said, "Betts displays equally a rich imagination and a disturbing vision."

Her books include *The Astronomer and Other Stories* (1965) and *The River to Pickle Beach* (1972). *Beasts of the Southern Wild and Other Stories* (1973) was a finalist for the National Book Award and brought her a third Sir Walter Raleigh Award. *Heading West* (1981) was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection.

*Souls Raised from the Dead* (1994) won the Southern Book Award and was named among *The New York Times* twenty best books of the year. *The Sharp Teeth of Love* (1997), her sixth novel, again brought Betts wide recognition for the power of her storytelling.

Her many honors include the North Carolina Award for Literature, the John Dos Passos Prize, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Medal of Merit for the Short Story. "The Ugliest Pilgrim," her most widely reprinted story, was the basis for a musical that won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, as well as a short film, *Violet*, winner of an Academy Award.

Betts was the first woman ever to chair the UNC faculty and was later honored by her colleagues with the Thomas Jefferson Award. Upon her retirement, a



distinguished professorship in creative writing was established in her name.

Two awards also acknowledge her contributions: the annual Doris Betts Fiction Prize offered by the North Carolina Writers' Network and UNC's Betts Teaching Award. She and her husband, retired judge Lowry Betts, live in Pittsboro and have a daughter and two sons.

### *From Souls Raised from the Dead (1994)*

Slowly at first, nervous white chickens stepped through their broken cages and tested the muddy slope down which the poultry truck has slid and overturned. It had been carrying 7,500 capons, fed on chemicals, raised for slaughter in houses heated and lit by electric current, and not one of them had ever set foot to ground before their stacked crates shifted on the sharp highway curve.

To the patrolman at roadside, the first escapees seemed to shiver at the unexpected touch of earth. If it were possible, they might have giggled, the sergeant thought, before they took their first odd leaps and tumbles, trying too hard to be the actual birds they almost remembered.

He snapped his head back, called "Keep moving please!" over and over to drivers who wanted to stop and stare at a ravine full of chickens.

Out of the wreckage, several of them flapped into a hackberry thicket and stuck there like windblown scraps.

"Keep moving, I said!" Frank waved more cars past. Some drivers were smiling. As the chickens scattered more widely a few neighbors from houses along the highway, with feed sacks and bags, began to capture lunch and dinner.

To Sergeant Frank Thompson it was one more comic scene. His eleven years with the North Carolina Highway Patrol included moments of bravery, others of dignity; but often he had been required to impose order on a chaos less criminal than ridiculous.

He squinted as the black truck driver waved, the pointed to the chicken thieves with their struggling tow sacks. Frank shrugged.

"Hell," the man said to nobody. He hefted an unbroken crate and rolled it squawking uphill to the patrolman. "Might as well take some yourself." Frank saw he had a knot on one temple and blood strung down his jaw.

"Not me." It was time for support to arrive—where was everybody? "Mister, I told you to sit still."

"I'm not hurt. Put these in your trunk?"

Frank shook his head but made the man sit on the full wooden crate. "Must have been doing fifty, were you?"

"Nawsir, she won't even make fifty down the hill. It takes downhill and a tailwind for forty—no sir! Listen, she was creeping at ten. Fifteen at the most!"

Frank kicked toward the great gouge raked through the road's muddy shoulder. "Forty at the least." A far siren was coming at last; good, a wrecker not far behind.

The blood trail, Frank suddenly saw, was coming not from the driver's swollen temple but out of the left ear. "Oh, Jesus." He leaned forward to see if the man's eye pupils were still the same size. "You lay down here; I mean it, right now. No, not flat." He waved traffic onward while he tipped the noisy crate into a pillow,

pressed him down, eased the man's neck against one edge for support. "Be still and never mind the damn chickens. I told you not to move around till the medics checked you."

"I tell you I'm all right. But look how these people be stealing—"

"Don't talk. Your boss can replace chickens better than your wife can replace you." In spite of Frank's moving arm, their little drama had backed up cars, with people leaning out to see exactly where the victim was bleeding and how much. More than anything Frank hated gawkers.

"I ain't married," said the resting man, but softly.

"Stay alive and maybe you will be." He was getting traffic under way when the driver made a funny noise and wet Frank's uniform with vomit. almost immediately the flashing red ambulance signal came into view. He stopped the cars so it could speed to them. As men leaped out with a stretcher Frank called, "Fractured skull?" then stepped to the center line of 15-501 to alternate north- and southbound lanes.

By now chickens were everywhere, screeching as they made low flight against windshields and metal roofs, lurching onto the road under wheels, one even resting on the blinking blue light of Frank's patrol car. The slower, injured ones were loose with the rest, dragging half-severed legs or bloody wings. Frank was glad when a Chatham deputy's car appeared and the two local officers agreed to detour traffic on both sides during the cleanup.

Still, it was almost five before the truck cab could be lifted and towed away, later when another poultry truck hauled unbroken crates and survivors back to Pittsboro, even later when spilled gasoline had been diverted from the small stream, and very late when Sergeant Frank Thompson had checked by the hospital, talked to mechanics, and finished his accident report.

He let himself into their Carrboro apartment with his key and snapped on the light. Silence. Tension. Frank stood motionless in the foyer for the ritual moment allowed fear to cover him in flood, since he was constantly fearful, on entry, unreasonably fearful, of discovering that fire, disease, murder, or rape had on this day found his house at last.

"Mary?"

The upstairs toilet flushed and her ridiculous wooden clogs made noise overhead. "You're late, General Franco!"

He waited until his daughter clattered into view, still uninjured, still unviolated. One more day. At sight of her crisp red hair, the faded jeans in which her legs were awkwardly too long for the rest, his skin grew warm. He laid hat and gun belt on the high closet shelf while she was banging down the steps.

"Pew, what's the stink?"

"Man threw up on my pants. What about that math test?"

She pinched the nose that was too long, like his. "Passed it, that's all I wanted."

"You ought to—"

"Want more, I know, did you eat something?"

"I'll make a sandwich after I clean up."

Frowning, she said. "You ought to—"

"Eat better, sure; I'll do that when you ace math." As he passed, he jerked



Mary into a hug so quick and hard it must have felt like ambush. The school counselor claimed she needed affection, a need that troubled Frank. Her mother had filled her own need, probably was still trying to fill it, in bed with many men. "You look nice," he said.

Mary gargled with revulsion. She was twelve, and all spring he had been trying to talk to her about menstruation. He had memorized more pamphlets than a damn gynecologist.

In the shower he looked down his body with puzzled detachment; this body that could disappoint one woman but father another; that had once taken a bullet which left small brown puckers, back and front, where it entered him waist-high on one side, drove through flesh but not organs, and flew on; this lean body built for running Indian-style, not meant to be cramped all day in a car seat while machinery chased after other speeding machinery.

To Frank some days this body seemed like one more uniform, now slightly worn and soiled, which he could step out of, could emerge from hairless and new, still a boy planning to grow up and be a doctor or the nation's president.

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## James McGirt

1874-1930



James Ephraim McGirt, born in 1874 into an African-American farm family in rural Robeson County, North Carolina, deserves recognition because of his determined pursuit of a literary career during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a time when success as a writer was almost impossible for a young black man.

Nevertheless, McGirt, a dreamer in love with the notion of writing itself, overcame many obstacles by the sheer force of his energy. He benefited from having a stable home environment and a strong-willed mother who quoted at length from the Bible and kept her four children apart from the community around

community around them.

When he was still a young man his family moved to Greensboro, where he completed his education in the public schools, writing poetry during his spare time and working at an assortment of odd jobs. He received a bachelor's degree from Bennett College in 1895 after only three years' study.

McGirt's first volume of poems, *Avenging the Maine*, was published in 1899 by Edwards and Broughton Company of Raleigh, and a second edition was brought out the next year. Often, his poetic concepts were handicapped by flaws in the structure of his verse, and John W. Parker, writing in 1954, said that McGirt had a "penchant for moralizing and for eighteenth century artificiality." Many of his poems had racial themes, and he sometimes wrote in dialect.

Aware of the shortcomings of his poetic efforts, McGirt apologized in the preface of his first book, noting that his writing was done when he was tired from a day's work and "...under very unfavorable circumstances." He persevered, bringing out another volume of poems, *Some Simple Songs*, in 1901, and the same year in Philadelphia published yet a third edition of *Avenging the Maine*.

Yet his frustration could show through in a poem such as "Tell Me, O Fate," in which he wrote: "Years have I labored, toiled and fought/But yet no prize I see./Tell Me, O Fate, if this is all/That shall ever be."

Set upon making a name for himself through his writings, he became better known as a literary enthusiast than as an author. Unsatisfied with the response to his poetry in the South, McGirt took up permanent residence in Philadelphia in 1903 and founded *McGirt's Magazine*, an illustrated monthly devoted to art, science, literature, and general subjects. He also operated McGirt's Publishing Company, used primarily to publish his own writings.

The magazine was successful for a while, with increasing sales, and by 1905 he had to move to larger quarters. It lasted at least four years and perhaps as long as six, but by the end of 1909 it was out of business.

He published another book of poems, *For Your Sweet Sake*, in 1905, which contained his best work. By 1907 he had turned to the short story, bringing out a volume called *The Triumphs of Ephraim*. But this was his last book.

Thus, all of McGirt's works were published within a relatively short eight-year span, from 1899 to 1907.

A writer for the *North Carolina Review* in 1910 predicted that McGirt had great promise and was a likely successor to Charles W. Chesnutt as the most prominent North Carolina Negro writer.

However, after this McGirt basically abandoned the field of literature, except for occasional lectures and public readings. He returned to Greensboro in 1910, turning the Star Hair Grower Manufacturing Company into a thriving business, and then later going into real estate sales. McGirt died, unmarried, in 1930. Acquaintances said that his interest in creative writing persisted and that he remained a poet at heart.

Ironically, this poet of "hope deferred" was buried in an unmarked grave in Maplewood Cemetery in Greensboro.

### BORN LIKE THE PINES.

Born like the pines to sing,  
The harp and song in m' breast,  
    Though far and near,  
    There's none to hear,  
I'll sing as th' winds request.  
  
To tell the trend of m' lay,  
Is not for th' harp or me;  
    I'm only to know,  
From the winds that blow,  
What th' theme of m' song shall be.  
Born like the pines to sing,  
The harp and th' song in m' breast,  
    As th' winds sweep by,  
    I'll laugh or cry,  
In th' winds I cannot rest.

### SPRING.

I rise up in de mornin'  
Early in de spring,  
And hear de bees a hummin'  
An' 'hear de robbins sing;  
Th're com' o'er me a feelin'  
So queer I know not why.  
I jus' sit down an' listen,  
It seem I 'most could cry;  
The win' has lost its biting,  
Aroun' de vine de bees,  
The air is full o' fragrance,  
From blossom of the trees,  
I stroll out in de garden,  
An' take a look bout,  
I see de ground' a crackin',  
The seed has 'gun to sprout.  
Beneath de vine a blossom,  
All dried and curled it lies,  
A striped little melon,  
Is hangin' 'fore my eyes.  
Its den I 'gin a 'hummin'  
And join de birds and sing,  
My heart is full o' rapture,  
And grandeur of de spring.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE OAK.

The spirit of the oak am I,  
 With head uplifted to the sky,  
 Though hail and storm beat in my face,  
 Through weal or woe I hold my place,  
 With head uplifted to the sky,

The spirit of the oak am I.  
 Birds I have sheltered many a year,  
 They hear the storm, desert in fear,  
 The strenuous eagle strives to stay,  
 But, ah! at last his heart gives way,  
 He stretches forth his feathered form,  
 And sails to heaven above the storm.

Devoid of every earthly friend,  
 I stand undaunted till the end,  
 With head uplifted to the sky—

The spirit of the oak am I.  
 And when the raging storm is o'er,  
 My feathered friends return once more,  
 And find me standing calm and free;  
 They chirp aloud and sing with glee,  
 With outstretched arm I bid them rest,  
 I hold no malice in my breast,  
 But welcome every passer-by—  
 The spirit of the oak am I.

## WINTER.

Oh! the winter's coming,  
 Leaves are getting brown,  
 Hickory nuts and acorns  
 Falling to the ground  
 Pumpkins getting yellow,  
 Persimmons getting ripe,  
 Opossum 'gin to fatten  
 And quails begin to pipe.  
 Bird dog in the broom sage,  
 Hunter's got his gun,  
 Erastus with old Traylor—  
 Opossum'd better run.  
 Turkeys in the corn-crib,  
 Chickens got their sway;  
 Let'm be, they're fattening,  
 For Thanksgiving Day.

## WHEN DE SUN SHINES HOT.

No, dere ain't no use er workin' in de blazin' summertime,  
Whin de fruit hab filled de orchard, an' de burries bend de vine;  
Der's enuf ter keep us libin' in de little gyarden spot,  
An' der aint no use'n workin' w'en de sun shines hot.  
Fur I'ze read it in de Bible 'bout de lilies how dey grow,  
It was put in der er purpus dat de workin' men mout know,  
Dat dis diggin' an er grabben, wusn't men't in our lot,  
An' der ain't no use'n workin' we'n de sun shines hot.  
Does yer heer de streams er callin' az it cralls erlong de rill;  
Does yer se de vines er wavin', biddin' me ter kum an' fill?  
Whar's m' hook and line—say, Hannah, give me all de bait yer got,  
Fur der ain't no use'n workin' w'en de sun shines hot.

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# Tom Wicker

1926-

Thomas Grey Wicker is one of America's most respected journalists and authors. Former Washington bureau chief and associate editor for *The New York Times*, he wrote the newspaper's "In the Nation" op-ed column for thirty years. It was required reading for anyone in Washington politics. He has also written critically acclaimed books of fiction and nonfiction.

After receiving a journalism degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1948, Tom Wicker began his newspaper career with short stints in Aberdeen and Lumberton, both close to his hometown of Hamlet. He then worked for the *Winston-Salem Journal* for eight years.



Following two years as associate editor of *The Nashville Tennessean*, Wicker began his career with *The New York Times* in 1960, serving as a reporter, Washington correspondent, and political columnist until his retirement in 1991.

Highlights of his storied career include his report on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. Wicker was in the press bus following the presidential motorcade when the shooting occurred, and his report has been called the most accurate first-hand account.

Through his "In the Nation" column, begun in 1966, Wicker helped the American public interpret events during turbulent times. He was appointed associate editor of *The Times* in 1968, a title that connotes a senior status of a special sort, as a writer, editor, and resident sage on journalism.

That same year, prisoners at the Attica Correctional Facility called for him to act as an observer during their standoff with prison officials. Wicker saw the incident through to its tragic conclusion, which he later described in *A Time to Die* (1975).

He has also written five other works of nonfiction, nine novels, and articles in more than twenty-five leading magazines.

Other nonfiction works include *Kennedy Without Tears* (1964), *JFK and LBJ* (1966), *On Press* (1978), *One of Us: Richard Nixon and the American Dream* (1991), and *Tragic Failure: Racial Integration in America* (1996).

He published three novels under the penname Paul Connolly: *Get Out of Town* (1951), *Tears Are For Angels* (1952), and *So Fair, So Evil* (1955). Novels published under his own name include *The Kingpin* (1953), *The Devil Must* (1957), *The Judgment* (1961), *Facing the Lions* (1973), *Unto This Hour* (1984), and *Easter Lilly* (1998).

A popular speaker on the nation's campuses, Wicker has been a visiting scholar at the First Amendment Center in Nashville and a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University.

His alma mater awarded him its Distinguished Alumnus Award and an honorary doctor of laws. He was one of the first five people named to the North Carolina Journalism Hall of Fame.

Other honors include the North Carolina Award for Literature, the Sarah Josepha Hale Award, the Sacred Cat Award from the Milwaukee Press Club, and the Sam Ragan Award from St. Andrews Presbyterian College.

Wicker is married to Pamela Hill, a television producer and a vice president of the Cable News Network. They live in Rochester, Vermont.

## From Dwight D. Eisenhower (2002)

In the autumn of 1956, Dwight D. Eisenhower was campaigning for a second term as president of the United States. I was "Sunday editor" of the Winston-Salem, North Carolina, *Journal*, and a devout supporter of Eisenhower's Democratic opponent, Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois. Momentarily abandoning journalistic impartiality, I raised a little money among my colleagues (the munificent sum of \$150, as I recall) for the eloquent Stevenson. In those days, the *Journal* staff regarded itself as something of a family. In that spirit, Mrs. Bill Hoyt, the wife of the publisher, chided me gently about my small and by no doubt improper effort.

"But Mrs. Hoyt, don't you realize," I replied in self-defense, "that Eisenhower has had a heart attack?"

Mrs. Hoyt drew herself up—she was a lady who could draw herself up impressively: "Young man," she said, "I would vote for Eisenhower if he were dead!"

She and hosts of other Americans might have done just that in 1956, because Eisenhower—known familiarly to everyone as "Ike"—was a popular incumbent revered as the victorious commander of Allied forces in the European theater during World War II and as a "man of peace"—the indispensable leader who in four years in the White House had kept the Cold War with the Soviet Union from turning hot and atomic. Throughout his tenure (1953 to 1961), as it turned out, Eisenhower was one of the best-loved presidents of the century, with an average 64 percent Gallup poll approval rating over the eight years of his two terms.

Eisenhower was, observers agreed, a "father figure" to the American voters of the prosperous and relatively tranquil fifties, many of whom had served under him in the European theater and—like good old Ike—were amateur golfers, backyard cooks, and going bald. A vast majority apparently believed that Eisenhower alone had protected them from the Russian bear and produced the rising material prosperity that had followed depression and war.

Therefore, despite his health problems and my fund-raising, he defeated Stevenson a second time in 1956 and by an even greater margin than in 1952. Many poll-takers and politicians believe that Eisenhower could have been elected to a *third* term in 1960, had he sought it—but he couldn't, because by then the Twenty-second Amendment to the Constitution limited all presidents to two terms. Thus, ironically, a highly popular Republican was the first president turned out of the White House by an amendment that originated in the Republican Eighty-second Congress as partisan, posthumous revenge against a hated Democrat, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and his four terms.



In the eight years Dwight Eisenhower was constitutionally permitted to serve as president, the public—like Mrs. Hoyt—did not seem to mind that he spent much of his time playing golf and bridge, that his closest friends were wealthy businessmen whose frequent largesse he happily accepted, and that his health was suspect—he suffered a heart attack during his first term, a small stroke, and a bout of ileitis in his second. In the fifties, liberals and many Democrats derided him as a “caretaker” president rather than a strong chief executive of the White House, a judgment he may have encouraged but that has been considerably moderated in recent years. Most voters obviously liked things Ike’s way. Times were good, after all, and the national father figure surely would keep the Soviets at bay and the economy rolling.

A self-proclaimed nonpolitician, Eisenhower was strongly conservative in domestic affairs and a convinced internationalist in foreign relations—though a hard-line anti-Communist. Nevertheless, his administration preserved much of FDR’s and Truman’s New and Fair Deals, though the conservative Eisenhower was contemptuous of both. He believed, however, as he told his press secretary, James C. Hagerty, “This party of ours and our program will not appeal to the American people unless [they] believe that we have a liberal program. Our hidebound reactionaries won’t get to first base.” Eisenhower’s almost constant conflict in foreign policy with those “hidebound reactionaries” gave him and his supporters the label “modern Republicans” and served to disguise the president’s more palatable form of conservatism on domestic matters.

Eisenhower avoided direct personal involvement in the two great moral issues of 1950s America, school desegregation and McCarthyism—though in the latter case his admirers claim that his deliberately above-the-battle stance was an effective opposition tactic. Standing aloof, in both cases, may have guarded and even extended his popularity—but at the expense of opportunities to provide moral leadership to a nation badly in need of it.

The man of peace, moreover, fumbled in 1959 perhaps the best chance then or since for a comprehensive nuclear test ban agreement with the Soviet Union or its successor state. And the policies of the strong anti-Communist who kept the Soviets at bay and the Cold War from heating up nevertheless planted the seeds of some future troubles, including the war in Vietnam. While in office, Eisenhower feared and resisted any such combat involvement in Asia. (“I don’t see any reason for American ground troops to be committed in Indochina,” he told Hagerty during the “French War” in 1954). After his return to private life, however, he strongly backed the American War in Vietnam, because he thought a former president should support a current president and believed that if U.S. armed forces ever were committed, it was necessary for them to be successful.

Eisenhower’s great political strength as president was his dedication to middle-of-the-road policies, and his insistence that he was guided only by devotion to duty and a sense of the national interest. These claims were the more believable owing to patriotic admiration for his role in World War II—still, in the decade of the fifties, the most dramatic and formative experience of many Americans’ lives—and by the fact that Eisenhower had spent most of his early life in the small and ill-financed prewar army, scarcely a career to be chosen by a politically ambitious man or by one whose goals were money and power.

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Additional information on Mr. Wicker and his work can be found on the web at [www.ncwriters.org](http://www.ncwriters.org).



## Laurels for Fred Chappell 1937-

Fred Chappell was already beloved and widely celebrated as a poet, critic, teacher, novelist, and short story writer in December, 1997 when Governor Jim Hunt named him North Carolina Poet Laureate. Sam Ragan had held that post until his death in May, 1996. Chappell ended his tenure as our symbol and substance of the literary arts in December 2003. No other poet laureate in the history of the state has served as our literary mentor and celebrant with more dedication and greater distinction. Chappell's appeal to the

broad spectrum of our citizens of all ages made them more aware of the power of creative language and the importance of poetry in their lives. As an accomplished professor at UNC-Greensboro since 1964, he could liberate poetry from academic circles and squares. This accomplishment speaks to his skill as a teacher/poet. In 1997, the year he became Poet Laureate, he was also named winner of the O. Max Gardner Award for his recognized excellence in the university classroom.

Holder of two degrees from Duke University, this Canton, NC native lives in Greensboro with his wife Susan. Their son Heath lives out of state.

Among Fred Chappell's other achievements as a poet, in addition to his public service as NC Poet Laureate 1997-2003, are the Bollingen Prize, the Aiken Taylor Prize, the T. S. Eliot Prize, and seven Roanoke-Chowan Poetry Prizes. He is also the author of eight novels, two collections of stories, and literary criticism in book and newspaper forms. All of his works have the rare integrity of lexical genius that unifies vision, that measures the whole view, whether with an elegiac tone, southern backsass, surprise, or just good humor. Fred Chappell is a North Carolina treasure.

### A Prayer for the Mountains

Let these peaks have happened.  
The hawk-haunted knobs and hollers,  
The blind coves dense as meditation,  
The white rock-face, the laurel hells,  
The terraced pasture ridge  
With its broom sedge combed back by wind:  
Let these have taken lace, let them be placed.

And where Harmon Fork piles uprushing  
Against its tabled stones, let the gray trout  
Idle below, its nervous spectrum a shadow  
That marks the stone's clear shadow.

In the slow glade where sunlight comes through  
In circlets and shifts from leaf to fallen leaf  
Like a tribe of shining bees,  
Let the milk-flecked fawn lie unseen, unseeing.

Let me lie there too  
And share the sleep  
Of the cool ground's mildest children.

Sam Ragan was for more than fifty years one of North Carolina's leading men of letters. As the state's first secretary of the Department of Cultural Resources and first chairman of the North Carolina Arts Council, he was instrumental in making the arts in the state accessible to a wide, varied audience. Born in Granville County, Ragan began writing poetry in grade school. By the time he was a student at Atlantic Christian (Barton) College, he knew he wanted to be a newspaperman. Ragan joined the Raleigh News & Observer in 1941 and, by the time he left in 1968 to buy The Pilot in Southern Pines, he was the News & Observer's managing and executive editor. He stayed at The Pilot until his death, continuing to write "Southern Accent," the column he began in 1948.



SAMUEL TALMADGE  
RAGAN  
(1915-1996)

Ragan published six collections of verse and four works of nonfiction. His poetry has been called "sensitive to the seasons of life, the sureties and contradictions of living, the elements in which we exist...written out of a Tar Heel's sense of place." When Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., appointed him North Carolina Poet Laureate in 1982, Ragan responded, "I don't know that I'll write poetry on demand, but I would like to encourage North Carolinians to read and write poetry. I'll be happy to do that."

## The Marked and Unmarked

from To the Water's Edge  
(Durham, N.C.: Moore Publishing, 1971)

I cannot say upon which luminous evening  
I shall go out beyond the stars,  
To windless spaces and unmarked time,  
Turning nights to days and days to nights.

This is the place where I live.  
I planted this tree.  
I watched it grow.  
The leaves fall and I scuff them with my feet.  
This is the street on which I walk.  
I have walked it many times.  
Sometimes it seems there are echoes of my  
walking—

In the mornings, in the nights,  
In those long evenings of silence and stars  
—the unmarked stars.

# THE PILOT

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The history of *The Pilot* and that of  
the North Carolina Literary Hall of  
Fame are inextricably bound.



James Boyd, novelist and publisher of  
*The Pilot*, was among the original inductees to the Hall of  
Fame in 1996. He and his wife, Katharine, who continued as  
publisher of *The Pilot* after his death, were owners of  
Weymouth, where they established a great literary tradition.

The late Sam Ragan, editor and publisher of  
*The Pilot* from 1968-1996, was instrumental in bringing the  
Hall of Fame to Weymouth and Southern Pines. He was  
inducted to the Hall of Fame in 1997.

And now, as publisher of *The Pilot*, David Woronoff, great-  
nephew of Jonathan Daniels, a 1996 inductee to the Literary  
Hall of Fame, continues this tradition of generosity and  
foresight by his important contribution to today's  
2002 induction ceremony.







